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The Nixon Budget: Lots of Money, Lots of Tricks

Much newsprint has been dutifully expended in reporting the budget that Mr. Nixon sent to Congress February 4. But coming as it does from a comatose Administration of uncertain longevity, the budget is as trustworthy as the menu of a restaurant with a depleted larder, a demoralized staff, and a proprietor preoccuplied with eluding the sheriff.

As might be expected of a President who needs all the friends he can get, the new budget commits few offenses against influential beneficiaries of federal largesse, but where it does, as is the case with quite a few health-related programs (see P. 3), it may be assumed that the budget writers composed their work in reasonable expectation that Congress will not tolerate the dismantling of some of the medical community's most valued programs. In fact, Mr. Nixon's two leading budget choppers, Roy Ash, director of the Office of Management and Budget, and Caspar Weinberger, head of HEW, have been loudly proclaiming their intent to cooperate with Congress. Ash has announced that OMB will no longer employ the nefarious device of impoundment to thwart the will of Congress, and Weinberger, at a budget briefing, planted himself squarely on the side of obeying the laws of the land when he announced that "In a number of areas, where Congressional intent has been clearly indicated, we are prepared to continue in the indicated direction."

Last-Minute Changes

Under the heading of research and development, the figures stated by the Administration are, with few exceptions, plumper than ever, as can be seen in the table on page 4. Energy-related R&D accounts for a big portion of the growth, rising from a current annual figure of just under $1 billion to $1.8 billion for the fiscal year that starts next July 1, plus $216 million that the Administration categorizes as "support programs" closely linked to energy R&D. But the mutability and patchwork nature of the budget—aside from the adventures that it faces in its forthcoming passage through Congress—may be inferred from the fact that between the printing of the official budget books, early in January, and their release to the press on February 1, so many amendments were made in the energy R&D budget that a multigraphed supplement was rushed out at the last minute.

The supplement, which was distributed at the press briefing that routinely precedes public release of the budget, reflected the addition of some $572 million to be obligated in the new fiscal year—with some items slated for such rapid growth that the thought intrudes that the Administration has concluded that the easiest way to shut up its energy critics is simply to announce massive spending plans. For example, obligations for research and development related to coal are budgeted to rise from $164.4 million to $423.4 million, a growth so extraordinary that it is not unlikely that the new figure was just plucked out of the air. Solar research, for which all ambitious politicians now have a good word, rises from $13.8 million to an even $50 million. And so it goes throughout the inventory of the federal government's lateblooming interest in non-nuclear energy research.

Not long ago, it may be recalled, the President in response to demands for expansion of energy research, told the would-be big spenders that money should not be allocated faster than it can be effec-

(Continued on page 2.)

In Brief

Citing overwork and lack of time, Senator Peter Dominick (R-Colo.) has resigned from the board of the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) and his place has been filled by Senator Ted Stevens, a moderate Republican from Alaska who, for obvious reasons, played a major role in the Congressional fight for the Alaska pipeline.

Meanwhile, Harold Brown, president of Caltech, former Secretary of the Air Force and chief of research for the Pentagon from 1961-1965, has been elected chairman of OTA's advisory council.

Semantic vapor continues to surround just what, if anything, the President intended to convey when he announced Project Independence, which he described as aimed at achieving "a capacity for energy self-sufficiency by 1980." Later, AEC chief Dixy Lee Ray said that "self-sufficiency" was not likely by that date. The latest word comes from John Sawhill, deputy director of the Federal Energy Office, who says, "By 1980, we want to demonstrate to the rest of the world that we are well on the way to energy self-sufficiency."

An energy-induced business slowdown should have little effect on employment of scientists and engineers, according to NSF Director Stever. The energy crisis, he said, "has called the attention of the people of the country to the importance of R&D. . . .I think employment figures for engineers and scientists will be better. . .even if there is a slowdown in business as a whole."

The R&D Figures-Making Less Look Like More

Although the budget traditionally mixes fiction and fact, the Nixon Administration has proved itself especially adept at bending figures to suit its rhetoric. The R&D budget for FY 1975 reflects this skill.

First, there is the tactic of making the figures appear larger than they really are. This is accomplished by the sleight-of-hand known as "rounding." Thus, R&D obligations, which are slated to go up by $1,626 million, can be shown to increase by $1,700 million — a difference of a mere $74 million. To accomplish the feat, simply take this year's obligation of $17,930 million and round it down to $17,900. Then take the proposed expenditure for next year, $19,556, and round it up to $19,600 million. Now take the difference, and it will equal "the largest dollar increase in more than 10 years."

Then there is the tactic of making the figures appear smaller than they really are. In the case of expenditures on space research and development, this is accomplished by the simple expedient of taking some of NASA's applications programs and relabelling them "civilian research and development." As luck would have it, what's left for space — which has lost its old glamorous appeal — will decline by $200 million.

BUDGET *(Continued from page 1.)*

tively spent. Of course, that was back in the days when Mr. Nixon assured the nation that it faces an energy "challenge," rather than an energy "crisis," but even so, it is difficult to see how his energy research planners have suddenly come up with a billion dollars or so worth of research and development schemes that as recently as last year were either unthought of or deemed unsuitable for federal support.

The annual appearance of the budget usually provides some clues as to who's up and who's down in presidential favor. (It was the last White House science adviser, Edward E. David Jr., who, following an attempt two years ago to get some big money for energy research written into the budget, commented, "You lose a few and you lose a few.") But in Watergate-numbed Washington, with close proximity to the President not especially prized, even where it is possible, it is difficult to determine who is influential over what.

Briefing by Troika

The manner in which the press briefing on the R&D budget was held did not create an impression of clearly defined lines of authority. Normally, it's the President's science adviser who steps before the press to tell how kindly R&D is being treated in the new budget. This time, the task was handled by a trio: NSF Director H. Guyford Stever, who, following the abolition last year of the White House Office of Science and Technology, was given the title of Science Advisor, presumably to anyone seeking advice, including the President; Dixy Lee Ray, head of the AEC, and John C. Sawhill, deputy director of the Federal Energy Office.

They radiated cordiality, but in view of the organizational chaos that the White House has so meticulously contrived for handling R&D, particularly in the energy field, one might be pardoned the thought that none of the three—representing the principal federal bureaucracies in the energy business—wanted to be away when the others were briefing the press about Mr. Nixon's energy plans.

Lots of Energy Chiefs

As for the origin and implementation of those plans, the layout of jurisdictions has now become so complex that it is difficult to determine who's responsible for what. The big boss of the energy field, of course, is William Simon, head of the Federal Energy Office. Just recently appointed as his top aide for R&D is Alvin Weinberg, former director of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. It is all to Simon's credit that he has equipped his organization with an R&D chief of Weinberg's stature, but the federal establishment is getting a bit overpopulated with policy-level energy officials and offices, not to mention the multitudes at the operating levels. As Science Advisor, Stever is in the game, backed up, at NSF, with his own Office of Energy Policy, as well as his Science and Technology Policy Office, which claims some interest in energy. Dr. Ray headed the task force that wrote the plan that presumably went into the budget, and though she is deeply involved in bloody bureaucratic combat at the AEC, she shows no sign of wanting a diminished role in energy matters elsewhere. And then there is the Office of Management and Budget, with financial and managerial powers that extend into energy programs.

A lot of the organizational untidiness would be corrected through adoption of the Administration's proposal to create an Energy Research and Development Administration, but no amount of reorganizing can remedy the presidential paralysis that afflicts the country. As long as that ailment endures, it is difficult to invest any confidence in what the White House says it plans to do over the 12 months starting next July.—DSG

Biomedical Programs Receive Severe Cuts

A lot of programs dear to the fiscal well-being of the biomedical community are scheduled for serious cuts in the proposed federal budget. But it's a reasonable certainty that Congress will not go along and that, in his weakened condition, Nixon would rather spend than veto.

NIH's health manpower programs, long a target of Nixon financial planners who contend that the medical professions are becoming overpopulated, are budgeted to drop from $567 million this year to $369 million in fiscal 1975. Health facilities construction drops from $302 million to a token $2 million, while schools of public health go from $20 million to zero.

Relatively large increases are recommended for the National Cancer Institute (from $527 million to $600 million) and the National Heart and Lung Institute ($531 million to $559), but the budgets for the other research institutes remain virtually unchanged, which means a drop in purchasing power of somewhere around 7 per cent. Since medical research ranks high among Congressional favorites, it may be expected that legislative remedies will swiftly be applied to the Administration's designs.

With the prospects for adoption of a national health insurance plan brighter than ever, the Administration is proposing to put sizeable sums into two new administrative concepts that are crucial to its quest for holding down medical costs. In new and supplemental requests, it is seeking $125 million as a downpayment on a Congressionally authorized 5-year experiment involving prepaid Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs).

For the purpose of establishing quality and cost controls over the delivery of medical services, the Administration is asking for a total of $92 million to finance the creation and operation of 120 Professional Standards Review Organizations (PSROs). The authorization of these peer review bodies for medical services slipped through Congress in 1972 as a little-noted amendment to Social Security legislation. Taken together, national health insurance, HMOs and PSROs add up to a economic and administrative revolution that, with relatively little notice, are going to change medical service in this country to an extent that is not at all forseeable at this point.

Dept. of Utter Confusion: HEW Budget Explained

Two successive presidential vetoes of annual appropriations, coupled with the impoundment of funds voted by Congress, has left the HEW budget in so contorted a state that it is doubtful that anyone actually comprehends what's available for spending and when, as witness the following budget briefing exchange, involving HEW Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger, HEW Comptroller John Young, and a reporter:

Q. Mr. Secretary, on page one of the budget summary, it is noted that there will be a drop in budget authority of half a billion dollars in the proposed budget of HEW, but there will be an increase in outlays of $3.8 billion. Now much of that $3.8 billion is what you call. . .impounded money?.

Weinberger. There's no impounded money in 1975. . .Budget authority in federal fundings is down because the 1974 figure has the forward funding for education and reflects the release of all those funds in 1974. But if you will look down at the bottom, you will see that the outlays increase by $3.8 billion just in the federal funds alone.

Q. None of that is impounded money at all?

Weinberger. No, there is no impounded money . . .

Q. Mr. Secretary, that doesn't make sense. You told us some weeks or months ago that the money that had been impounded and was released—$1.1 billion released by the President—the spending of that money would be spread over three years. Now, some of that must be being spent in 1975.

Weinberger. Yes it is.

Q. That was the question.

Weinberger. But the point at which the money is spent is not a reflection of continued impoundment or anything of that kind.

Q. How much of the $3.8 billion that are the outlays for fiscal 1975 come from that $1.1 billion of impounded funds that were released by the President?

Weinberger. I can't tell you. . .

Young. In 1975, you get roughly $2.3 billion in outlays. About $1.3 billion is made up of 1973 funds. Those are the so-called released funds. You also get a billion dollars increase in outlays in 1975 as a result of the increases in appropriations over the budget we submitted a year ago. That comes roughly to $2.3 billion in outlays that occur in 1975 as a result of those two occurrences. There is absolutely no impounded funds . . .

Q. . . .Are you saying in effect that what we will actually do in cash outlay is a billion dollars more? You lost me there.

Young. I am saying, in 1975, in terms of outlays, checks issued, you will spend $2.3 billion more, as a result of the occurrence of two things: the released 1973 money, which includes the court cases [in which HEW was directed to release impounded funds], plus a billion dollars as a result of increased appropriations over what the President submitted in 1974. Okay?

Military Spending Still Dominates R&D Budget

While the Administration continues to tout the line that it is swinging the national research enterprise away from the long postwar emphasis on military research and toward "civilian" problems, the fact is that military and space activities continue to hog the R&D budget.

Taking the Administration's numbers at face value, which calls for some charity, the grand total which is to be obligated for R&D in the new fiscal year is set at $19.6 billion. Of this sum, $10.2 billion is labeled "Defense, including AEC military-related programs," and another $2.6 billion is listed as "space program." The figure for "civilian programs" is $6.8 billion.

With Defense R&D spending scheduled to rise to a record level in line with Secretary Schlesinger's determination to proceed with a new round of strategic weapons development, it is useful to examine the question of whether, within the Executive Branch, any restraints are being applied to DoD's passions. There is no evidence that the Office of Management and Budget has much, if anything at all, to say about Defense spending plans. OMB Director Roy Ash, who came to his post directly from debt-ridden Litton Industries, is not disposed to clamp down on Defense spending. But even if he or his OMB subordinates were, they'd have a difficult time contending with Schlesinger, who, having long served in OMB, knows the ins and outs of budgetary warfare as well as any official in Washington.

To some extent, civilian scientists in the White House formerly constituted a counterweight to the Pentagon's fervor for new weaponry, but since Nixon banished presidential science advice to the office of the Director of the National Science Foundation, there is no civilian scientist within shouting distance of the military budget. The reorganization plan that did in the White House Office of Science and Technology specified that the NSF Director, in his role as Science Advisor, was not to concern himself with military R&D, except upon request.

At the briefing that NSF Director H. Guyford Stever gave on the budget, in his role as Science Advisor, a questioner noted that military R&D is roughly half of the budget and asked what if any role Stever had had in working out that portion. To which he replied:

"Very specifically, in the reorganization act, the Science Advisor. . .was not excluded but not included in the Defense and security matters; the Defense program—I did not contribute a great deal to it."

The elimination of outside scrutiny over Defense R&D has for some time been mainly a matter of concern to that small group of civilian scientists who, with arms control as their binding interest, generally operated as parttime advisers in association with the President's Science Advisory Committee.

CONDUCT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
(in millions of dollars)

Agency	Obligations			Expenditures		
	1973 actual	1974 estimate	1975 estimate	1973 actual	1974 estimate	1975 estimate
DOD	8,382	8,573	8,881	8,417	8,676	9,201
NASA	3,065	3,309	3,122	3,271	3,104	3,173
HEW	1,844	2,332	2,228	1,791	2,191	2,354
AEC	1,361	1,429	1,702	1,361	1,429	1,739
NSF	480	530	654	428	460	538
Transportation	311	366	396	312	342	384
Agriculture	371	393	412	349	389	416
Interior	264	287	510	235	282	428
Commerce	191	210	266	179	192	233
EPA	161	174	336	145	180	264
VA	74	85	94	75	85	94
HUD	58	65	70	48	58	67
Justice	35	52	56	24	46	56
All other	176	132	128	150	151	125
Total, conduct of research and development	16,802	17,930	19,556	16,784	17,585	19,016
Total, conduct of research	6,478	7,287	7,807	6,428	6,971	7,483
Total, conduct of development	10,324	10,643	11,960	10,356	10,613	11,532

PSAC, however, went down the drain with the White House science office, and no provision has been made for reconstituting it or anything like it under the auspices of the NSF-based Science Advisor.

However, DoD's opportunity to run wild in formulating its R&D designs has now aroused some concern in Congress. At the opening of the Senate Armed Services Committee hearings on the new Defense budget, Senator Stuart Symington (D-Mo.), who is heir apparent to the aged chairman, John Stennis (D-Miss.), assailed the decline in outside assessment of DoD's budget.

Symington stated that a "source of serious concern, as we review this gigantic increase requested in the defense budget, is the rapidly shrinking circle of outside scientists and experts who serve as consultants to the Administration on various technical matters. As a result, fewer and fewer outside experts have access to the essential classified material, because it is determined they do not have a need to know.

"This development in turn limits the number of people who can intelligently advise members of Congress, particularly on technical defense issues. I consider this a very serious development, one that could, as military technology becomes more complex, lead us further down the road our Constitution was created to block."

Serious as it may be, what must be faced is that since the Administration deliberately connived to exclude independents critics from officially looking in on Defense R&D planning, no amount of Congressional protests can remedy the situation. Congress, of course, could thwart DoD's plans to step up the arms race simply by refusing to appropriate funds. But outside of token cuts that have been applied now and then, Congress has never shown any stomach for serious assaults on the Defense budget. What DoD asks for from Congress, it usually gets, which is why the best time for influencing the DoD budget is when it is being prepared, rather than after it has been printed and delivered to Congress.

Congressional Atomic Committee Fast Declining

Ralph Nader has advised the Congressional Joint Committee on Atomic Energy that the greatest service it could perform for the American people would be to dissolve itself. Although the JCAE has not embraced this suggestion, a number of developments are in the process of loosening the Committee's 27-year grip on nuclear affairs.

Nader's suggestion came January 28 in testimony at nuclear safety hearings, in the course of which he attacked the committee's "zeal for promoting nuclear power," which has "so overshadowed its responsibility to assure the public safety that it has put to risk not only this generation but a hundred generations to come." He accused the committee of collusion with the AEC and the nuclear industry, of sweeping problems under the rug, and bullying and browbeating environmentalists who testify at committee hearings.

It's all familiar stuff, and makes for entertaining reading, but the committee's influence is likely to be diminished by much less dramatic factors than a frontal assault from its critics. First, the committee is about to lose one, and perhaps two, of its most powerful members. And second, the Atomic Energy Commission itself is likely to be broken up by legislation now pending before Congress.

Rep. Craig Hosmer (R-Calif), a charter member of the committee, its ranking Republican on the House side and an unswerving supporter of nuclear power, has announced his intention not to seek reelection to Congress this year. Hosmer, whose hearing room style alternates between highly abrasive and piercingly sarcastic, devoted his Congressional tenure to atomic energy affairs to the exclusion of most other things, and his deep knowledge of the nuclear power industry has made him an extremely powerful force on the committee.

And if that were not enough, Hosmer's colleague-in-arms, Chet Holifield (D-Calif), is likely to face a tough primary election this year, and is rumored to be considering bowing out gracefully rather than face the prospect of ending his long Congressional stint in defeat at the polls.

Holifield and Hosmer formed two members of a troika which has steered the committee since its beginnings. The third, Melvin Price (D-Ill), is the least effective of the three. In Price's hands, even with the help of knowledgable new members such as Mike McCormack (D-Wash), the committee's influence, not to mention its entertainment rating, is likely to diminish.

Still another, and perhaps most important, cloud in the committee's future is the proposal to split up the AEC into a Nuclear Energy Commission (NEC), which would regulate the nuclear power industry, and a separate Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA). The AEC's laboratories would form the basis of ERDA, and it would also incorporate energy research programs of other agencies.

An ERDA bill has already passed the House, and it is now being considered by Senate Government Operations. If the proposal does get through Congress, the JCAE would be faced with the prospect of watching over a diminished agency, and of being responsible for only a fraction of the functions of ERDA. Logic alone would suggest that ERDA in its entirety should come under the purview of a single committee — such as the Interior Committee, although it should be noted that logic is not a very prominent ingredient in the Congressional committee setup.

House Committee to Hold Hearings on CBW Programs

For the first time in more than four years, the Nixon Administration's policies for chemical and biological weapons (CBW) are to be opened up to a searching public inquiry. A subcommittee of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs is planning a set of public hearings which are expected to take place at the end of March or the beginning of April, and which will last for about a week.

The hearings will focus on three aspects of CBW policy — whether or not herbicides and tear gases are covered by the Geneva Protocol, the Army's plans to develop "safe" nerve gas weapons called binaries, and an overall look at the need for chemical and biological weapons.

The focal point for the hearings is a resolution introduced by Rep. Wayne Owens (D-Utah), an energetic freshman Congressman who has his sights fixed on the Senate seat which is about to be vacated by Wallace Bennett.

CBW was the subject of public hearings in 1969, following an accident at the Dugway testing ground in Utah, where nerve gas drifted outside the test area and killed some 6400 sheep. A year later Nixon announced that the United States would halt all development, testing and stockpiling of biological weapons and that the US would never be the first to use chemical weapons in war.

A flurry of interest was generated in chemical weapons again last year when it came to light that the Army had failed to carry out its promise to destroy stockpiles of nerve gases at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal on the edge of Denver International Airport, and when word leaked out that the Army is planning to manufacture a new generation of nerve gas weapons.

Defense Department Acknowledges Work on Radiation Weapons

Unnoted by the general news media, a recently released "sanitized" transcript of a closed hearing last spring before the congressional Joint Committee on Atomic Energy reveals the Defense Department acknowledging serious interest in lethal radiation for battlefield use. The revelation came in the following exchange between Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.), Carl Walske, assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Atomic Energy, and Brig. Gen. Donald Keith:

Symington. Do you know if the Department of Defense is giving any consideration to developing low-yield antipersonnel battlefield weapons which depend upon enhanced neutron radiation as a kill mechanism?

Walske. Yes, we are. . .

Symington. Would you agree that (deleted) a low-yield device could be extremely effective against ground forces?

Walske. . . .At one time there was some uncertainty about the amount of radiation that it would take to get immediate incapacitation of a person. While in the past there had been quite a burst of enthusiasm for enhanced radiation weapons, uncertainty that developed in the area of biological effects did slow down the interest in it, but a good deal of interest exists today in the area. . . .

Symington. Am I correct in stating that the AEC and the Defense Department are just now giving serious consideration to developing (deleted) weapons for battlefield use?

Keith. I believe the (deleted) experiment that Dr. Walske previously described (deleted) is our first move in that direction, although we do have (deleted).

The above exchange is contained in a 135-page transcript, *Military Applications of Nuclear Technology*, Part 2, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Military Applications, Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, May 22, June 29, 1973; available for $1.20 from US Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Letters to The Editor

Dear Sir:

I have been reading *Science and Government Report* from the very first issue and I find it extremely informative and accurate in predicting a good many of the trends in government funding, especially in the biomedical field, in which I am engaged.

However, I am writing to you about one aspect of the style which I find extremely annoying and of an extremely "Smart Alecky" type of expression. A good example is in the Jan. 1, 1974 issue in the heading: "Energy Crisis Not Likely to Create R&D Gravy Train". I am wondering whether you know what the term "Gravy Train" implies. For example, in this so-called "energy crisis" the oil companies are on a "Gravy Train" — that is to say, they are making enormous profits. How can you apply the same term to scientists and engineers who essentially require a living stipend? Certainly in our society a welltrained scientist, when he is gainfully employed, is not referred to as "one on a Gravy Train".

You know very well the importance of our society to use the talents of scientists and engineers for the betterment of mankind. To that end such individuals merely ask for employment and your attitude is very misleading and insulting. I have recently been awarded a research grant from the N.I.H. I am not living on Easy Street, nor on any "Gravy Train." I am trying as best as I can to carry out research in the area in which I have received support. The article, by the way, that I am referring to, certainly is a good one and shows a good deal of insight in the goings-on in Washington. Please try to control yourself from such remarks pertaining to scientists, engineers, etc., who by any stretch of the imagination, are not on any kind of Gravy Train when they are employed.

Yours sincerely,

George D. Pappas, Ph.D.
Professor of Anatomy and
Deputy Chairman of the Department,
Albert Einstein College of Medicine,
Bronx, N.Y.

Dear Sir:

In a spirit of friendly competition, please allow me to point out that the booklet from the University of Chicago which is listed in the January 15 issue of *Science and Government Report* is neither unique nor unprecedented. In fact, I am proud to say that the University of Illinois Medical Center Campus has been doing this for years with considerable success. The (Illinois) booklet is our third such publication and, while I won't claim this as a fact, I wouldn't be surprised if my good friends in the University of Chicago Public Information Office got their idea from somebody else.

Perhaps, for the record, you'll give the competition some equal publicity?

Respectfully (with a smile),

Max I. Light, Director,
Office of Public Information,
University of Illinois,
Medical Center, Chicago

NIH Staff Rallies to Defense of Leadership

Scientists at the National Institutes of Health have rallied to the defense of the NIH leadership in the latest outbreak of hostilities between health managers in the Nixon Administration and NIH officials who have had the temerity to contest their program-chopping doctrines.

A letter, signed by some 460 NIH scientists, has been dispatched to the Washington *Post* as a public response to charges made last month by Assistant Secretary for Health Charles C. Edwards in a letter to the *Post* (SGR Vol IV, No 3). And the Inter-Assembly Council of Scientists, a bench-level organization of NIH workers, has asked Edwards for a private meeting to discuss the Administration's policies for biomedical research.

The latest exchange follows the resignation of NIH deputy director John Sherman, who used the occasion to fire off a public blast at the Administration's health research policies. The *Post* endorsed Sherman's complaints in an editorial, and Edwards hit back in a letter with charges that NIH suffers from weak leadership.

The nub of the dispute is the growing centralization of control over research policies at the HEW headquarters and in the Office of Management and Budget. Edwards argued in his letter that the "halcyon time when NIH was essentially "an independent part of the federal health enterprise" is now over. An institution which soaks up $2 billion a year in federal funds cannot be entirely insulated from "the serious fiscal and managerial problems that must concern us all," he said.

NIH Defense

To which the NIH scientists have replied that "we fully appreciate the importance of political and economic considerations in the process by which the nation decides how much is to be spent on biomedical research. But whatever that sum may be, we believe that the nation will reap the largest benefit if scientific and medical considerations govern the programs and administration of NIH." The letter also pointed to the "extraordinary success" with which the NIH leadership has established "an atmosphere of creative scientific inquiry. . .by operating on the principle that scientific and medical criteria, rather than political considerations, must be the basis for policy decisions related to biomedical research."

It then went on to tick off a number of major NIH-sponsored discoveries which have contributed greatly to the treatment of diseases. Such discoveries, the NIH scientists argued, are the result of "two decades of free scientific investigation, rather than large-scale mission-oriented research projects" — a thinly disguised reference to the centrally managed and politically prominent wars on cancer and heart and lung diseases.

But what really stung the NIH scientists was a suggestion in Edward's letter that if the NIH leadership had been "more perceptive and responsive, we might not have witnessed the removal of the cancer research effort from the administrative control of NIH, a move that threatens the further dissolution of biomedical research efforts." The NIH scientists replied that they, too, deplore the fragmentation of NIH, but add that "it is essential to recognize that this fragmentation was opposed by the NIH administration." They might also have added that the NIH leadership was fighting to retain control over the cancer research program when the Nixon Administration was publicly backing Kennedy's National Cancer Act, a measure which would have set up the National Cancer Institute as an independent body.

Catalogue Lists US Publications

Highly recommended to SGR readers who wish to keep abreast of the flood of federal government publications concerning science, technology and related fields is the catalogue titled *Special Interest Publications*, 58 pages, available without charge from the US Department of Commerce, National Technical Information Service, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, Va. 22151. Tel. (703) 321 8543.

The catalog lists hundreds of often-useful but poorly circulated government reports, periodicals and other publications under the following headings: administration, behavior, building technology, business and economics, computers, control and information theory, energy, environmental pollution and control, industrial technology, library and information sciences, materials sciences, medicine and medical services, transportation, and urban technology.

HEW Delays New Regulations on Sterilization

Faced with a lawsuit and a flood of criticism from public interest groups, HEW has suspended until March 8 new regulations that were intended to prevent federal funds from being used to sterilize people against their will.

Critics charged that the regulations, which were originally scheduled to take effect February 6, were so full of loopholes that they represented no increased protection over present rules. During the period of suspension, HEW will consider comments from interested parties, but in view of increasing political interest in issues involving medical ethics, it is doubtful that the regulations will be put into effect without substantial revision.

The now-suspended regulations, (*Federal Register* Vol 39, p 4730), were drawn up following charges last year that two young black girls in Alabama had been sterilized without their knowledge or consent, and later allegations that mothers on welfare had been forced to undergo sterilization.

These reports provoked widespread outrage and led to a wholesale reappraisal of HEW's regulations.

Review System Challenged

The new regulations decreed that no non-therapeutic sterilizations should be carried out on any person under the age of 21 unless a specially established Review Committee certifies that sterilization would be in the best interest of the subject. Moreover, if the patient is incapable of giving legal consent, either because of mental capacity or because he or she is below the age of consent, then in addition to approval by a review committee, the matter would have to be brought before the courts.

However, the review committees to be established by the regulations would be made up of individuals chosen by officers of the program through which the proposed sterilization would be funded. Since that is a little like combining both judge and jury, the provision has not surprisingly run into some opposition.

But the chief complaint voiced against the proposals was that they do not address the question of therapeutic sterilization. The Health Research Group, a Nader affiliate, for example, charged that the regulations would permit "physicians to convince women to have what are actually non-therapeutic sterilizations by writing specious medical reasons in a patient's records." Therapeutic sterilization would not have to come under the purview of the review committees.

Dr. Charles C. Edwards, Assistant Secretary for Health, wrote in the *Federal Register* announcement of the new regulations that "the Department of Health, Education and Welfare is of the view that sterilization is one of a number of acceptable methods of family planning" and he said that the federal government would continue to fund projects which provide for sterilization as a method of family planning.

What finally convinced HEW to delay implementing the regulations for a month, however, was a court suit brought by attorneys for the Relf sisters, the two girls who were alleged to have been sterilized against their will. They contended that the regulations do not provide sufficient safeguards and that they would violate a patient's rights to privacy.

NATURE Staffer to Write for SGR

Starting with this issue, Colin Norman, Washington correspondent of the British journal *Nature*, will also be writing for SGR as a contributing editor. He replaces Philip M. Boffey, who has been appointed an assistant editor of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

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